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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: DECEMBER 04, 2009

Summary: Reports of the testimony of top U.S. officials before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was highlighted in almost all dailies on Friday. Newspapers quoted Secretary Clinton as emphasizing that "Pakistan is crucial to success of Afghan strategy." Defense Secretary Gates' remarks that "Afghan withdrawal date is not final," and Admiral Mullen's comments that "withdrawal will be based on conditions on ground" also received extensive coverage. Several newspapers reported that the U.S. donated school supplies to the Bajaur Agency. Continuing its malicious U.S.-bashing drive, "The Nation," reported that the "Naval Headquarters in Islamabad was being monitored by the U.S. Embassy much before the terror attack (on Wednesday)." The same paper also recycled a "Vanity Fair" story claiming that nuclear scientist "Dr. Khan is on hit list of Blackwater." In its editorial, "Dawn," noted that "reversing the Taliban's momentum," is a "vital goal if Washington's plan is to succeed in the long term in Afghanistan." Terming the Afghan conflict a "new Vietnam war," prominent columnist, Ayaz Amir, opined in "The News," that "we must not become another Cambodia, a country which has still not fully recovered from what America did to it 30-40 years ago." All TV networks reported a terror attack at a mosque in Rawalpindi on Friday afternoon that killed scores of people. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Pakistan Crucial To Success Of Afghan Strategy: Hillary "Dawn" (12/04)

"The presence of Al Qaeda in the tribal areas and the fear that the insurgents may be seeking nuclear weapons made Pakistan the focus of America's new war strategy, senior US officials told a Senate panel on Thursday. 'The Taliban regained momentum in Afghanistan and the extremist threat grew in Pakistan - a country with 175 million people, a nuclear arsenal, and more than its share of challenges,' Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Afghan Withdrawal Date Not Final: Gates "Daily Times" (12/04)

"U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates has hinted that the July 2011 withdrawal timetable for Afghanistan is not final, saying extra troops would be in place in July 2010, and a December 2010 review could affect the target withdrawal date. . . Separately, Mullen told CBS News in an interview that the withdrawal would be conducted 'responsibly' and 'based on conditions on the ground.'" (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Congress Worries Over Obama's Plan For Pakistan "The News" (12/04)

"President Barack Obama's planned troop build-up in Afghanistan came in for more skepticism on Thursday with lawmakers zeroing in on how the US will deal with 'terrorist havens' in Pakistan. 'What happens in Pakistan ... will do more to determine the outcome in Afghanistan than any increase in troops or shift in strategy,' said Sen John Kerry. Opening a hearing on Afghan strategy, Kerry said it was the presence of al-Qaeda in Pakistan, its direct ties to and support from the Taliban in Afghanistan and the perils of an unstable Pakistan that drive our mission."

News Story: Pakistan Has 'Serious Reservations' Over US Afghan Policy "Daily Times" (12/04)

"Pakistan has 'serious reservations' over U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to send an additional 30,000 combat troops to Afghanistan, diplomatic sources said on Thursday. The sources said Pakistan had been 'kept in the dark over the finer parts of the review policy' announced by Obama, as the administration never shared its details with Pakistani officials."

News Story: Pakistan Was 'Kept In Dark' "Daily Times" (12/04)

"Pakistan was 'kept in the dark over the finer parts of the review policy' announced by US President Barack Obama, diplomatic sources said on Thursday. The sources said Pakistan had 'serious reservations' over Obama's decision to send an additional 30,000 combat troops to Afghanistan."

Editorial: The Afghan Challenge, an editorial-note in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/04)

"Obama pegged the success of his surge policy on 'reversing the Taliban's momentum' to deny them the ability to overthrow the government. This is a vital goal if Washington's plan is to succeed in the long term in Afghanistan and if it is not to re-enact its strategy of cut-and-run as in 1989. This might also prove the most difficult goal to achieve. . . Only time will tell if American pressure leads to good governance in Afghanistan."

Opinion: Familiar Road -- All Too Familiar Refrain, an op-ed by Ayaz Mir in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/04)

". . . We are in this war together with the Americans. Geography leaves us with no other choice. But in this new Vietnam war we must not become another Cambodia, a country which has still not fully recovered from what America did to it 30-40 years ago. Our military must do what is necessary in South and North Waziristan and perhaps beyond. But, under American pressure, it must not allow itself to become over-extended. . ."

Editorial: Obama And Pakistan, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000)(12/04)

"US President Barack Obama's new Afghan policy centres on three 'core' elements. First, the troop surge adding 30,000 US troops to those already deployed there amidst the hope that Nato can be persuaded to contribute another 5-7,000. The latter may prove more difficult, since the first responses from Europe to Obama's speech at West Point indicate the same reluctance that has been on display for some time now. The exception, as always, is Britain, whose Prime Minister Gordon Brown pledged another 500 British troops even before Obama spoke. The rest, led by Germany and France, want to wait for a consultation with their allies towards the end of January 2010 before taking a final decision. Second, Obama emphasises more civilian presence to help the reconstruction and recovery of war-battered Afghan society, offering some faint hope to its beleaguered people. This was one of the original elements of the Bonn and Tokyo conferences that pledged funds and reconstruction help that never really arrived in sufficient quantity to make a critical difference. Third, and perhaps most crucially, Obama underlined that success in Afghanistan was inextricably linked to a long term, sustained partnership with Pakistan."

Opinion: Obama's Afghanistan Strategy And Pakistan, an op-ed by Shafqat Mahmood in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/04)

"If the Americans are not here for the long haul, what kind of a message does it send to Pakistan: that they should turn every possible Afghan group against them and have no leverage left in

Afghanistan after the Americans leave? This would suggest that the new American strategy in Afghanistan has it and Pakistan at cross-purposes. This could have negative consequences for both, but a far greater potential of damage to Pakistan. The only win-win situation is for them to collaborate. Pakistan can help the Americans enormously by using their influence and knowledge of the Afghan Taliban to sponsor a serious dialogue between the two sides. This is the only viable exit strategy for the Americans. And this is the only way in which both countries can focus on their shared objective of eliminating Al Qaeda."

Opinion: The Perils We Face, an op-ed by Dr Masooda Bano in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/04)

". . . From a US perspective, this position makes good strategy and political sense. However, chances that things will actually change in Afghanistan in the next 18 months are remote . . . even if the US withdraws Pakistan faces severe challenges as living next to a war-torn and ungovernable neighbour threatens Pakistan's own stability. What is clear is that the militarist route chosen by the Bush administration is leaving some countries and regions even more ungovernable than before. This clearly does not help curtail militancy."

Editorial: Obama's Confusion, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/04)

"As reactions to Obama's Afghan policy announcements, both official and unofficial, begin to flow in, the central theme seems to be a sense of confusion as to what Obama is striving for in an Afghan strategy that does not go beyond the already failed military-centric approach. The Pakistanis are wanting certain basic clarifications regarding the Obama statement which seemed to be conveying confused signals. . . Nor is it just Pakistan that is confused over what exactly Obama hopes will alter with the military surge since the basic policy remains flawed. The European NATO members are also unwilling to simply throw in their lot with the Obama scheme of things with the French refusing to send more troops - so all NATO can muster up for the new surge are about 5000 more troops. Unless Obama actually makes a policy shift, the surge is already doomed to failure."

Opinion: Obama's Afghan Strategy, an op-ed by Zafar Hilaly in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (12/04)

"Obama's election was a miraculous event. The Americans did not believe it could happen. Another miracle will be needed if his Afghan strategy is to succeed. But because Obama achieved a miracle once, some believe that he can make it happen again. . . The threat posed by the Pakistani Taliban, the Jihadis and al Qaeda to Pakistan, though serious, is not of a magnitude that cannot be contained and rolled back. Indeed that is happening."

Editorial: America's Carrot and Stick, an editorial in Karachi based Pro-Jehadi right-wing daily "Ummat" (Cir. 33,000) (12/04)

"U.S. continues to adopt the policy of 'carrot and stick,' and its demand for 'do more' does not end. It always comes with new threats and warnings. The Obama's new policy is a plan of actions that we have been receiving from time to time as dictations regarding taking action against Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders."

Opinion: The Troop Surge, an op-ed by M. A. Niazi in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/04)

". . . The Obama Administration has placed the time for withdrawal before the 2012 US presidential election, but still close enough for Obama to cash in on the votes of those who want the war ended. However, there are already commentaries which dilute the commitment to withdraw, and which claim that withdrawal will depend on success, not dates. This might be only a tactic to keep the Taliban off-balance, and deny them the success that a date would represent, but it will also mean that the Obama Administration has no intention of sticking to the date it has set if it means that it sees the troop surge as bringing success. . . There is still time, between this troop surge and the US admission that it has been defeated in Afghanistan, for a reversal of policy, and for the government to

stop toeing the US line to the extent that Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi did, by asking the USA to prolong its stay in the region."

Editorial: Is U.S. Going To Follow In India's Footsteps?, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (12/04)

"Despite using its full military might during the last eight years, the U.S. could not conquer Afghanistan therefore the deployment of more troops would also fail to yield desired results. However, it would not be a far-fetched imagination to think that the U.S. could expand the war to Pakistan on the pretext of destroying Al Qaeda hideouts in our tribal areas. Such a possibility invites the serious and immediate attention of our political and military leadership to comprehend the real objectives of President Barack Obama's new Afghan policy."

Opinion: Obama's Two Generals, an op-ed by Cyril Almeida in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/04)

"McChrystal's plan is the last chance saloon. If it fails, the Americans will only see a few very unsettling things in the region from afar: an unstable Afghanistan with the Afghan Taliban resurgent; a Pak-Afghan border that is the stamping ground of all kinds of militants, headlined by Al Qaeda, and the source of 'reverse strategic depth' for penetration into Pakistan proper; and a nuclear-armed Pakistan beset by perennial political instability, racked by militant violence and paranoid about Indian designs in the region."

Editorial: Barak Obama's Address: New Threats For Pakistan, an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (12/04)

"Sooner or later it is the military top brass that has to make the policy in response to President Obama's new Afghan strategy. Besides a response from Pakistan civilian and military leadership, people of Pakistan needs to be united to counter the American designs against our country."

Editorial: Pakistan Is Real Target Of New Afghan Policy, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (12/04)

"The biggest shortcoming of President Barack Obama's much-awaited new Afghan policy is that it has been formulated without taking Pakistan on board. We must understand that sooner or later the U.S will leave Afghanistan, but Pakistan will have to live with these very Taliban. Therefore, is it better for us to revisit our policy of supporting Washington in the war on terror and remain impartial."

News Story: 20 NATO States Commit More Troops "Daily Times" (12/04)

"More than 20 countries plan to send more troops to Afghanistan following US President Barack Obama's increased commitment to the war, NATO said on Thursday, but the overall number falls short of US expectations. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said he expected US allies to provide at least 5,000 extra troops."

News Story: UK Pledges \$83m Aid: Gilani Urges 'Clarity' On US Afghan Strategy "Daily Times" (12/04)

"Pakistan wants 'more clarity' on US President Barack Obama's new war strategy in Afghanistan, said Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday. Gilani said his government could not yet decide how and if it could implement Washington's new approach. 'We are studying that new policy. We need more clarity on it,' he said after talks in London with his British counterpart, Gordon Brown."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: U.S. Surveillance Of Naval Hqs "The Nation" (12/04)

"Much before the terror attack on the Naval Headquarters in E-9 sector of Islamabad, the complex was being monitored by the US Embassy. The Nation has learnt that on November 18, a gentleman working for the US Embassy in Islamabad, (see photocopy of ID card) Mr. Abdul Ghafoor, was stopped by Naval police and intelligence personnel in the morning as he was suspiciously monitoring the entry/exit of Zafar gate (at Zafar Chowk) and doing reconnaissance work of naval installations."

News Story: A.Q. Khan On Hot List Of Blackwater "The Nation"
(12/04)

"Immediately after 9/11 the then, U.S. President Bush issued a lethal finding' giving CIA the go-ahead to kill or capture Al-Qaeda members. To implement the order CIA put together a small team of agents whose job was three fold: find, fix and finish. . . The hit list included name of Pakistan's nuclear hero Dr. A.Q. Khan reported U.S. magazine Vanity Fair.

News Story: 20 Killed In Rawalpindi Mosque Blasts, Firing - "The News Web Edition" (12/04)

"Twenty persons have been killed and many injured in Parade Lanes mosque suicide attacks, firing and blasts in Rawalpindi. DG ISPR has confirmed the reports of blasts and firing around the mosque. According to reports, at least six to seven gunmen entered into Parade Lanes mosque located near Qasim market. They threw hand grenades initially followed by indiscriminate firing. Security forces officials opened retaliatory fire."

News Story: Pak Fears It May Pay Price Of U.S. Afghan Surge "The Nation" (12/04)

"President Barack Obama's troop surge in Afghanistan has sparked fears in Pakistan it will lead to more US drone attacks and military involvement in its border areas, possibly further destabilizing Washington's ally. Many analysts and security officials fear an emboldened Afghan Taliban could then capitalize on Obama's plans to start withdrawing troops in 18 months by waiting it out in Pakistan, which already faces militants on its own soil."

News Story: Two Taliban 'Commanders' Among 20 Killed "Dawn"
(12/04)

"Two Taliban 'commanders' were among 20 militants killed in clashes and air strikes in Swat and Orakzai Agency on Thursday. In Swat, 13 insurgents were killed in clashes with security forces on Thursday."

News Story: 7 Militants Killed, Three Hurt In Fata Operations "Dawn"
(12/04)

"Seven militants were killed and three injured while 20 others arrested during operations by security forces in different parts of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and NWFP on Thursday. Official sources said that seven militants including an important local commander surrendered to security forces in Maidan area of Lower Dir."

News Story: Al Qaeda Will Try To Provoke India-Pakistan War: Gates - "Dawn" (12/04)

"US Defence Secretary Robert Gates warned on Thursday that Al Qaeda would try to provoke a war between India and Pakistan with the aim to destabilizing Pakistan and gaining access to its nuclear arsenal." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Pakistan Says Has Proof Of Indian Involvement "Dawn"
(12/04)

"Pakistan reiterated on Thursday that India was behind terrorist activities in Balochistan and Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Commenting on reports that Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna had denied any Indian interference in Pakistan, Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit said: 'India cannot deny its involvement in Balochistan and Fata because Pakistan does have evidence to this effect.'"

News Story: Pakistan Has No Proof Against India: Krishna "Daily Times" (12/04)

"The Indian external affairs minister on Thursday rejected Pakistan's claims of having information regarding New Delhi fomenting the insurgency in Balochistan, saying Islamabad had no evidence against India."

Editorial: Engaging India, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/04)

". . . Talking to Pakistan is in India's own interest. The fight against militancy is best fought together, not at daggers drawn. Pakistan's enemies are India's enemies. If India does indeed pull back troops from Kashmir, as Home Minister P. Chidambaram told parliament, it could send a signal that justice may be delivered in due course. . ."

Editorial: "Partial Withdrawal (Of Indian Troops From Occupied Kashmir) Is No Substitute To Right Of Self-Determination," an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (12/04)

"It seems that the timing of the New Delhi's announcement to withdraw its forces from the occupied Kashmir with the unveiling of the new Afghan policy of U.S. President Barack Obama is another Indian attempt to fool the world by diverting attention from atrocities being committed in the held valley. The international community, especially the United States, must take immediate notice of the situation keeping in view the security of Pakistan. It is also imperative for our government to make it clear to the international community that real objectives of the war on terror would remain elusive if immediate steps are not taken to pre-empt the evil designs of India."

MISCELLANEOUS

Opinion: Anne Patterson's Blackwater-Gate" an op-ed by Fasi Zaka in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/04)

"I wonder if Anne Patterson is using the Bill Clinton defense, when he tried to wiggle out of confessing to an extra-marital affair by claiming that oral acts do not cover that definition. Is she denying Blackwater (which technically doesn't exist anymore), by evading responses on Xe? If that is the case, it is disingenuous and untrustworthy. Blackwater changed its name to Xe (which is short for Xenon, an inert element) to appear harmless in the wake of bad press around the world. Maybe they should have changed their name to Hydro, which would not refer to a neutral, water-like substance but hydrogen, the most inflammable of elements."

News Story: What was Nicole doing in Torkham? "The Nation" (12/04)

"An American lady, arrested on Tuesday (December 1) while being illegally present in Khyber Agency has been found to have no passport or proper visa on her. The Political Agent, Khyber Agency, Mr Wazir, when contacted by TheNation, confirmed these facts and revealed that the lady, Ms Nicole Tung, hailing originally from Hongkong claimed she was an American national working for the American government. This was corroborated by the personnel of the US Consulate, when they visited the Political Agent's office to get her released. According to an eye witness account, the US diplomats became abusive and started threatening the officials when the Political Agent informed them that she had been handed over to the Special Branch where a specially constituted Joint Investigation Team was interrogating her."

News Story: Female Commandos Deployed In Islamabad "The News" (12/04)

"The federal police on Thursday deployed contingents of female commandos at important places, keeping in view the volatile law and order situation in the capital. The commandos are fully trained and capable of tackling any untoward situation. Islamabad SSP Tahir Alam Khan has made the deployment along with the police force on the directives of Islamabad Inspector General of Police Syed Kaleem Imam, said a press release. The commandos would be deployed at universities, colleges, shopping centres and bus terminals to check the movement of suspicious women."

News Story: U.S. Donates School Supplies to Bajaur Agency "The News" (12/04)

"Schools in Bajaur Agency will be better equipped to accommodate students returning from IDP camps with today's donation by the U.S."

government of approximately \$70,000 worth of school furniture and supplies." (Story also covered in "Jang," "Islam," "Aaj Kal," "Al-Akhbar,")

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)

Patterson